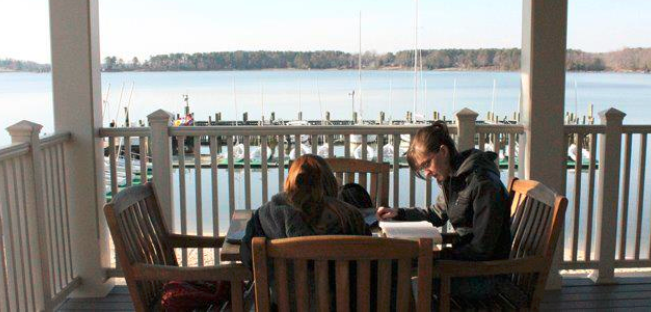
Hi there! If you have found me on this page, then you are quite aware of my teaching intentions. I am currently in my first year of grad school at The Citadel. It’s a mighty fine program. Let me tell you a bit about myself…

***The beginning …almost***

I have an undergraduate degree in Language and Literature from St. Mary’s College of Maryland. St. Mary’s is a liberal arts college located in historic St. Mary’s City on the St. Mary’s River. This college is probably one of those beautiful colleges in the country.

Challenged by freedom, I was not the most exemplary student. It took me some time to get my degree. I eventually pushed through and graduated with over a 3.0. Keep in mind my freshman year GPA was anything but stellar. A couple of semesters with a 4.0 can turn things around.

After graduating, I roamed around a bit. I enjoyed many jobs. And then…I met this guy. We married after six months and started a family after a couple of years. My family became, and still is, the focus of my life. I chose to stay home with my babies. I am really glad I did. Those little monkies are almost grown now and I am ready to pursue my joy as an educator of young adults.

***It’s in my blood…***

This is my dad: John M. Scott. He was a vocational education teacher in St. Mary’s County, Maryland for almost 20 years after retiring from a 22 year Naval Career. He was a natural with teenagers. For all of the qualms I may have about him as a father, his students adored him. He was instrumental in the lives of many students who went on to build successful careers because of his tutaledge. He had a very rough start in life, but it enabled him to understand the needs of adolescents.

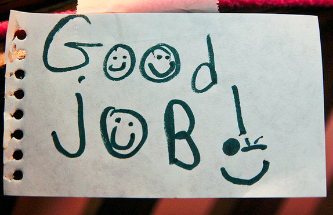
I resisted the idea to teach because I resisted the idea of getting permission to do something that I innately understood how to do. I tried many backdoor approaches to getting a teaching position. Sometimes the maturity process takes awhile. After trying to sneak in the backdoor of education, I decided to get my masters. I am am very glad that I did.

***My philosophy…***

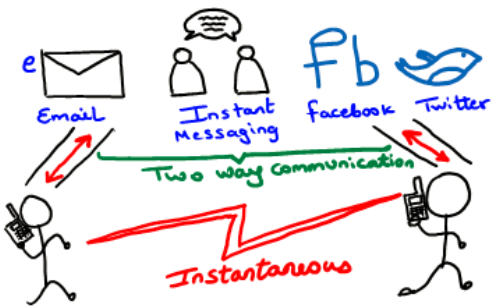
As a future English teacher, my personal philosophy of education is naturally very eclectic. I like to think of my philosophical approach to education as a recipe that contains the following: one cup of Realism, one cup of Existentialism, ½ cup of Post-modernism, and two tablespoons of Pragmatism to be used as a binder. Mix all of these ingredients together in a bowl constructed of Idealism. This is English Class Laboratory.

 My classroom will be a warm, inviting, comfortable and literacy rich environment. Students will have access to a variety of reading material which will include many levels and interests. Reading material will be updated, as needed, to meet the needs of the students. The walls will be organized with information pertaining to clear and concise classroom expectations; school policies; English reference material; and student work. Ample supplies will be available for all students. Desks will be arranged to accommodate ease of movement. Desk organization will also be changed from time-to-time to incorporate different teaching strategies.

One of the roles of the English teacher is to be open-minded and accessible to new ideas so that all students, regardless of background, can be taught in an environment that best suits their needs. This type of idealistic thinking removes barriers which could inhibit student achievement and growth. From this view, we can introduce more practical ways to impart knowledge to students. However, if we begin with rigid ideas, learning cannot take place because student motivation suffers. All children deserve to be understood. Once educators understand the child’s viewpoint and needs, pragmatic approaches to learning can be introduced. This idea is important to me because in my experiences with at-risk students, I have discovered that in many instances learning occurs when the students feel valued. Additionally, not only is the role of the teacher to educate all students, but the role is also to work cooperatively with peers, parents, and other educators. We can make the idealistic assumption that all people want to be happy. The end goal of education is the pursuit of happiness and peace.

 Towards this pursuit, students will continue to learn the how to effectively read, write, speak, listen, and study. Study skills are extremely important because they organize and transfer information into long-term memory. In my experience with students, I have discovered that many children do not understand the importance or mechanics of studying. In my classroom, I would provide opportunities for students to understand how studying affects the brain in hopes that they could experience personal success based on this discovery. In fact, in all areas of instruction, I would provide ample opportunities for students to experience success. I would begin the year with very accessible easy-to-learn and curriculum-based instruction to boost student self-esteem. Gradually, the level of difficulty would increase throughout the year. I would teach students how to read effectively by providing reading material that is interesting. Naturally, all students are not going to be interested in the same material. I will rely heavily on student choice when I am allowed to deviate. When humans have choice they tend to enjoy themselves. Enjoyment leads to wanting more. I would model critical reading for the students; as I would model everything that I expected them to master. I would assess their mastery before I allowed them to work independently or in groups.

Students would learn how to write effectively for audience. Copious amounts of feedback would be given without grades to promote a safe learning environment. Exploration without grades would “stimulate an intense awareness in each student of ultimate responsibility for his or her own education and self definition.” (Ornstein, Levine, Gutek, & Vocke, 2014) Once the student is comfortable with feedback, grades would be introduced. Concurrently, critical thinking, reading, and communication skills would be taught during the writing process. Reflection by both the teacher and the student would happen at intervals to stimulate growth of the individual and the group. This process would teach the student how to reflect by example and also assess student performance in a cooperative learning environment. These skills will assist the student to successfully navigate the world.

The curriculum taught in the classroom would ideally come from a group of experienced teachers and educational psychologists who have a wide range of knowledge about diverse learners. The English curriculum should include reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards designed to prepare students to become self-sufficient and productive members of society. Because of the literacy dense world we live in, the curriculum should include standards which focus strongly on developing writing skills. It is now common knowledge in the educating world that today’s schools are not producing strong writers. The job market is demanding a workforce that is extremely literate. As an English teacher, I will constantly focus on assisting students to become effective communicators and analyzers.

A good lesson plan always differentiates. Many students in this class probably operate at different levels. Differentiating instruction by offering oral, auditory, sensory, and kinesthetic options would touch all learners. Offering choice according to reading level and interest would soften the barrier between “too difficult” and “not difficult enough.” Proper assessment should be done to ascertain skill levels of all learners before practical application could be incorporated into the lesson plans. Once that information is discovered, individual instruction time could be tailored to meet the needs of the student. Frequent assessment will take place in the beginning of the year to make sure the work is neither too hard nor too difficult. Adjustments will be made as needed.

Homogeneous classroom management does not generally work in today’s society. Classroom management begins with clarity of instruction and developing personal relationships with the students. All classrooms are different due to the nature of demographics. However, a basic foundation or template can be constructed to fit any demographic. As a community of learners, the students and I would begin by creating and signing a shared social contract in each class. This creates ownership and citizenship in the classroom for the students and the teacher. Since the students define their own rules as created in the classroom via the social contract, aberrant behavior may lessen over time.

High School English class should be a safe place where young adults can try out new ideas challenging themselves, their fellow classmates, and their teachers. The process of reading classic literature and reflecting on it through writing is the perfect place to develop maturity of thought. English class should be a rich environment where old ideas can be compared to new ideas. This process should be thoughtfully guided by the teacher.

 This eclectic approach to teaching is dynamic, especially as it relates to the study of literature and writing. Even though Pragmatism is in opposition to many of the practices aforementioned, I believe it can be woven through all approaches. Each student is an individual and will experience success by being exposed to different approaches. Classrooms and schools are not vacuums, but chaotic laboratories of experimentation with foundation.